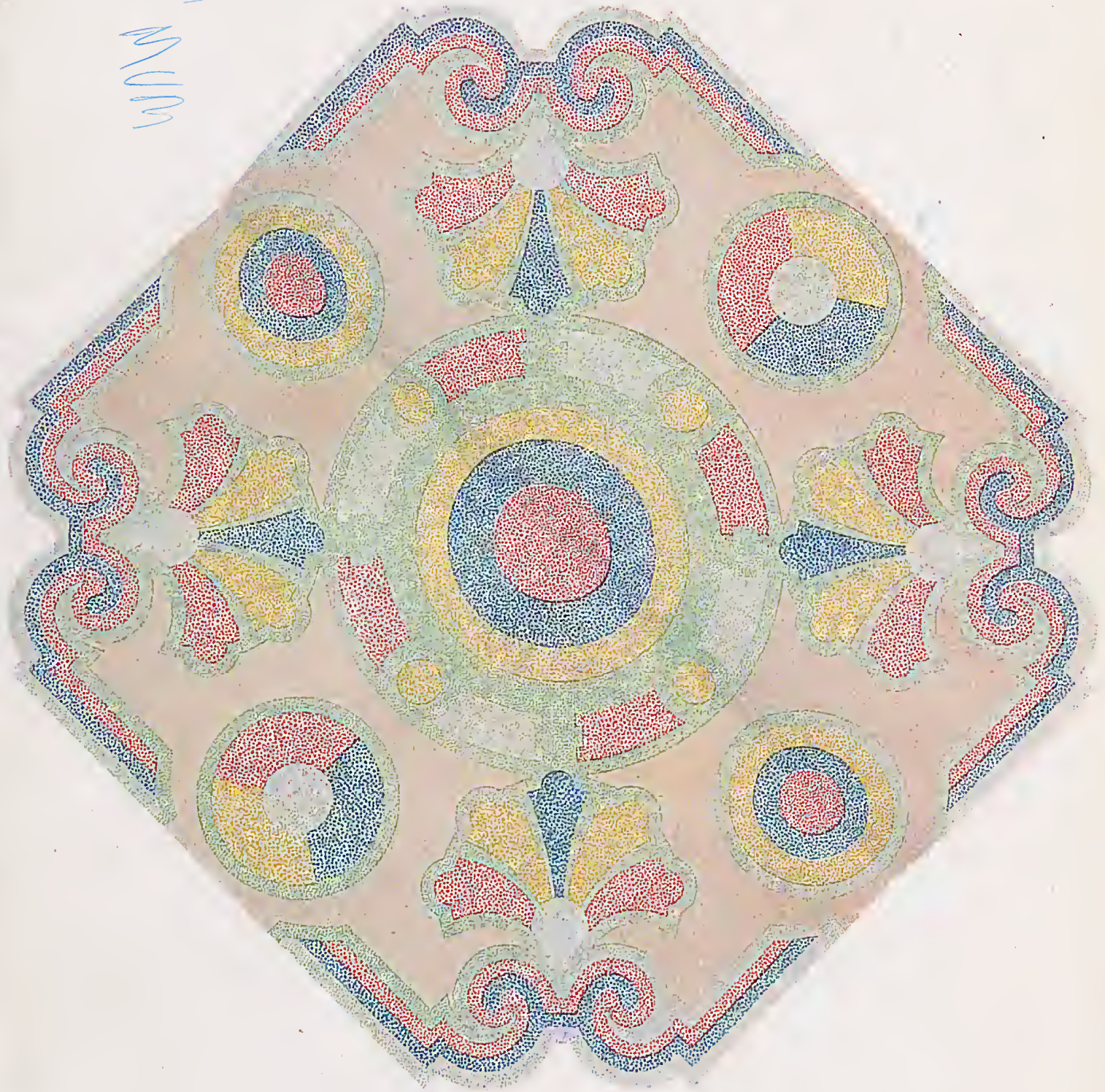


Vol 7 No 3 November/December 1995

# *Australian* Garden HISTORY

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*Journal of the Australian Garden History Society*



by LESTER TROPMAN

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PRINTED by SAS Printing, Melbourne

ISSN 1033-3673

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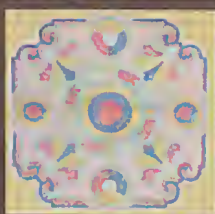
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## COVER

'Garden in  
Geometric  
Style', plate 28  
from *M'Intosh  
The Book of the  
Garden* (1853-  
55). See article  
p.20.



Managing our gardening cultural heritage is hard work. Gardening is not a relaxing occupation and educating people to appreciate how much time and energy is required to maintain a garden is often difficult.

Interestingly, people involved in conserving a garden's important cultural values will require more energy, suffer greater anxiety and be subjected to often intense scrutiny by their peers. Working with gardens can be highly emotive.

All gardens are special to their creators, minders and caretakers and we must be mindful of the emotional attachment that grows within people tending gardens.

Varieties of garden types are numerous. Some gardens are simply a tree in a lawn, a collection of terra-

cotta pots, woodland shrubberies, architectural terracing or parterres.

Gardens which are considered to be special are usually identified as items of environmental heritage. These gardens are the result of design and planting programmes from at least 50 years ago. Often the garden design and planting we do today will mature long into the future. Old maturing gardens are now in the hands of caretakers, land managers and custodians who are responsible for guiding those gardens towards the next century but who may not always be aware of what was intended when the garden was originally designed. The management programme may be to guide maturity or set in place a holding pattern, or clear-fell and start again. An understanding of a garden's evolution to its present state is necessary for informing such choice.

Gardens do have qualities and cultural values which must be respected in their care and management. These important cultural values may require research, investigation, assessment, analysis and lots of discussion with 'stakeholders' to be identified. Maintaining a garden's value is a process of conservation.

Establishing what are the culturally important values a garden exhibits or had in the past is essential should you, as custodian, wish to conserve those values. Assessing values is a rigorous process and criteria have been established. The value criteria for assessing a garden's importance are historic, aesthetic, social and scientific. These criteria are headings under which significant values are identified.

The significance of a garden or planting feature should be carefully stated against those criteria to avoid labelling a garden with false or illusionary values.

This process of establishing significant garden values will not identify characteristics such as the tranquillity, gaiety, decline and fun that all gardens seem to gain with time, unless these values are significant design features intended in the garden. Documenting or sketching the values of gardens are tools for their management. The valuing of a garden's significance can cause extensive discussion especially when a garden has evolved to something quite different from what was intended.

Over-mature gardens or planting features which have been examined to establish their significance have sometimes resulted in a total reconstruction, that is, the whole garden or planting feature has been removed and replaced with new plantings to match an earlier more significant garden design.

Recently the Privy Garden at Hampton Court was reconstructed to an earlier phase. Reconstruction such as this is often associated with planting schemes where avenues or the like have declined and the plant material no longer maintains its design values. With good values assessment, it can be easy to make decisions about totally removing and reconstructing a garden or replanting features associated with buildings.

The preciousness and reverence we hold for gardens or planting complexes is very often a highly emotive concern and decisions involving their management should only be taken once their values have been clearly identified.



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## CONTRIBUTORS

**RICHARD AITKEN** is a historian and heritage consultant specialising in cultural values of designed landscapes.

**RODGER ELLIOT**, along with his wife Gwen, have had a deep interest in Australian plants for over 35 years. They have owned and operated retail and wholesale Australian plant nurseries. Rodger has written many books and is probably best known as co-author with David Jones of the multi-volume *Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants* suitable for *Cultivation*.

**TOM GARNETT** has written a column for the *Melbourne Age* for the past 15 years and was Gardening Editor for a time. He has written four books: *Stumbling on Melons* (illustrated by Jenny Phillips); *A Gardener's Pot-pourri*; *Man of Roses*; and *The Evolution of a Gardener*. The *Garden of St. Erth* at Blackwood in Victoria was started by Tom and his family while he was Headmaster at Geelong Grammar School.

**RICHARD HEATHCOTE** is Manager of Rippon Lea House Museum and Historic Garden.

**ROBIN LEWARNE** has a Masters Degree in Economics, is a Certified Practising Accountant and has been the Honorary Treasurer of the National Management Committee of the AGHS since 1989 as well as being active in the Sydney Northern NSW branch.

**GREG LEFOE** has recently been appointed to the position of Research Officer for the Elm Leaf Beetle project. A biologist with a background in pest control, he is responsible for research on elm leaf beetle and its control. As secretary of the Elm Leaf Beetle Liaison Committee he is involved in fund-raising and educational roles, and the implementation of Integrated Pest Management strategies for elm leaf beetle.

**HOWARD NICHOLSON** has been a farmer, a literary agent and a professional cook. He is co-owner with Trisha Arbib of Bundanoon Village Nursery in the Southern Highlands of NSW. The nursery specialises in perennials, herbs, rugosa roses and unusual food plants, including medlars. They also run a mail-order second-hand book business, specialising in books on gardening and food, and hold courses on herbs and making preserves.

**HELEN PROUDFOOT** is a historian and writer with a particular interest in gardens and landscape. She has published *Gardens in Bloom*; Jocelyn Brown and her Sydney Gardens in 1989, and was principal author of *Australia's First Government House*, 1991. She has just completed a PhD thesis on 'Town Plans and their influence on the Settlement Process, 1788-1849'.

**STUART READ** is a New Zealand born landscape architect who designs gardens when he can and struggles with a small suburban garden when he can't. Mostly he prefers admiring the gardens of other people, and is thankful of any opportunity. Stuart is Treasurer of the ACT, Monaro and Riverina Branch of the AGHS.

**LESTER TROPMAN** is an architect and landscape consultant who has been involved in the conservation of buildings, gardens and landscapes since 1973. Lester recently completed the Landscape Management Plan for Norfolk Island Historic Site, Kingston, which includes some of the earliest remaining landscapes in Australia.

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The Australian Garden History Society was formed in 1980 to bring together those with an interest in the various aspects of garden history – horticulture, landscape design, architecture and related subjects. Its prime concern is to promote interest and research into historic gardens as a major component of the National Estate. It aims to look at garden making in a wide historic, literary, artistic and scientific context.

The editorial content of articles, or the products and services advertised in this journal, do not necessarily imply their endorsement by the Australian Garden History Society.



by TOM GARNETT

No man but a blockhead' declared Dr Samuel Johnson in 1776 'ever wrote, except for money'. Though this may not be entirely true of authors, it is more likely to be so of publishers and still more of booksellers. Christopher Lloyd, to my personal knowledge, writes because he enjoys writing; and the fact that he has the garden of Great Dixter on which he can hang his writings is a piece of serendipity. When he was in Australia, what he enjoyed most was not so much the gardens he saw as the wildflowers of the western Grampians and being given a primary school tour of the Anglesea heathlands by Mary White. Yet maybe it would be difficult to maintain Dixter without the income from his writings.

What a publisher thinks will sell determines what gets published and the title of what gets published is determined by the booksellers, who want clear guidance from the titles as to which shelf to put a book on. Unless, of course, they can sell books simply by the author's name. Once the marketeers have achieved that objective, it matters little what is inside a book.

Recently, gardening books needed to have the word 'cottage' in the title, no matter that those who bought such books had never seen, and did not wish to own, a true cottage garden with a straight path to the front door, vegetables on each side, two paths at the back leading to the dunny and the compost heap, espaliered fruit trees bordering the paths, with low-growing flowers in front and tall ones against the fences. A shrub which produced nothing edible would be a rarity.

A gardening book must also, preferably, have the word 'garden' in the title and one about roses must somewhere have 'rose'. Because at least till recently Australians were lacking in confidence about their ability to garden well, they bought books with elementary instructions, which were often rehashes of material in other, earlier (and generally foreign) books. Or they bought, and still buy, books from the northern hemisphere, especially coffee-table books full of photographs, always taken in summer when the sun was out (so that blues tended to come out as purple) of gardens designed for an utterly different climate and light.

Now that publishers are international, there is a tendency for books to be 'Australianised'. The main markets for such books are the United States and Britain; our market is so small that it provides merely the icing on the cake. The worst example of such books was one from South Africa, called *Australian Plants A to Z* – what gave it away were

references to 'our native erica's and ixias', the only eucalypt recommended was *Eucalyptus globulus* (as a bedding plant – no doubt an admirable use for the seedlings.)

Until I became gardening editor of the *Age*, gardening books were not generally reviewed. I tried to review all such books, good or bad, because I believed the public deserved a warning about some of them. Thus I have received hundreds of books. A great many – even a majority – are, in my opinion, worthless. A recipient may look at a book once and then never again.

I don't believe that you can be taught to garden from books, though some of them will stimulate your imagination; there are just too many varieties. You must learn from your own mistakes

and by using your eyes in the gardens of others. Russell Page, in what I consider the most stimulating of all gardening books, *The Education of a Gardener* reports that the first thing he did when confronted with a new garden was to walk around the neighbourhood making notes of which plants were growing particularly well in that area.

I was delighted when Barbara Wenzel wrote *Painting the Roses White* after I challenged someone to write a book based upon their mistakes. I had grown tired of books written by 'experts' (a term I deplore) who always seemed to know exactly what to do, and always to be completely successful.

There are, of course, different categories of books. You must have some general reference books, but you will find it hard to find a truly satisfactory one for Australian conditions,

though the great encyclopaedia is nearing completion. Not nearly enough attention has been paid to the range of climates that exists on the mainland and in Tasmania where the south-east corner is milder than most parts of Victoria, just as there are places in Queensland, such as Stanthorpe, which gets more frosts than any part of Victoria except the alps. Nor has much attention been paid to the needs of plants for differing day-lengths.

In the gardening parts of the northern hemisphere, the most important climatic determinant is frost, whereas in Australia it is rainfall and when that rain falls. The amount of winter sun a garden receives is also important and where shade falls.

'Never buy anything but floras and monographs' was the advice given by someone who proceeded to write perhaps the best general books on rock plants. But he lives in Scotland. These may seem technical subjects and not the concern of ordinary gardeners, most of whom, in Australia, have small areas in which to garden. But watering, and the management of shade are two of the most important skills



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demanding of any Australian gardener. Far more plants are killed by over-watering than by lack of water, the need for which is generally obvious. When we first came to Victoria, I was struck by the fact that, in this huge and sports-mad country, schools had far smaller playing fields than in Britain. I came to realise that this was because of the comparative lack of water. In my youth in northern England, I never saw a garden hose.

The social and economic factors behind the creation of gardens tend to be neglected and I entirely agree with Patrice Newell about *The Story of Gardening* by Martin Hoyles, who emphasises, among the other things, the importance of cemeteries and municipal gardens in forming gardening taste. (I don't know Michael Pollen's *Second Nature* but must certainly get it.)

Gertrude Jekyll thought that about ten acres was the right size for a garden – *Ten Acres and an Axe* is one of my favourite books (I must have lent it and I can't remember the author's name!). Gertrude Jekyll was Edna Walling's mentor; and those who employed Walling tended to have gardens larger than the norm. Most of our gardens are much smaller and need plants of proportionate size. How many suburban gardens do you see with trees which are out of scale?

One thing that makes me cross is the general failure to recognise that gardening is an art – perhaps the most comprehensive of all arts (and includes most forms of scientific investigation as well). Has the Arts Council ever made a grant to a gardener? Yet what other art encompasses painting, sculpture (both static and mobile), the textures, colours and shapes of materials, scents and music (of water, of birds, of wind in casuarinas for example).

In Laurie Eager's *Our Mau Arty*, the story of a jobbing gardener in a north-east subdivision of Melbourne, the engineer, who has become immobile, has designed his house and garden so that he can examine each plant in detail through binoculars from his verandah. So, as I myself become more immobile, what books should I put in the small gardening bookshelf I shall be able to reach? *The Language of the Garden*, Anne Scott-James' personal anthology with her pithy comments at the head of each extract; with, beside it, *The Pleasure Garden* illustrated by her husband, Osbert Lancaster – as perceptive a history of gardening as the companion volumes are of architecture and interior design.

Russell Page, of course. Farrer's *The Rainbow Ridge* and *On the Eaves of the World*, as much for the extravagance of the language as the botanical information. For that I should turn to Roy Lancaster's *Travels in China* with the cornucopia of illustrations and potted biographies of the early (mostly French) plant collectors, not least because they often describe a plant's habitat. These would include books not yet written such as a detailed account of Mueller's travels and collecting. The run of *Hortus* would be there because of the width of its subject matter. Alice Coats for her descriptions of the myths which have grown up round plants and their renames. *English Gardeners* (Conde Nast 1980), an illustrated dictionary which is much more than its title suggests. Bill Molyneux's *Bush Journeys* – again for its habitat conditions. In fact, books about people and plants, not about 'how to do it'.

## FOR SALE

### 'Stirling', complete with Edna Walling garden

40 Carlsberg Road, Eaglemont

ONE OF EAGLEMONT'S (Ivanhoe's) best streets near Eaglemont village and train stations. 11km from City Centre, close to Yarra River parks.

LAND SIZE: 20 x 85 metres (65 x 265 feet). Just under half an acre.

HOUSE: Solid brick, cottage style, 3 bedrooms or 2 bedrooms with study, 2 open fireplaces. Gas central heating.

GARDEN: Designed by Edna Walling. The property belonged to Blanche Marshall, a close friend of Edna Walling and for many years her book-keeper. The house was built in the 1930s by the Marshalls. The property has a number of established trees such as birches, oak, Chinese elm, Japanese maples, Irish cherry etc. Extensive use of natural stone paving, retaining walls etc.

ENQUIRIES: David and Helen Perry  
(03) 9457 5649



## MEDLAR MESPILUS GERMANICA

by HOWARD NICHOLSON

The medlar is a small deciduous fruit tree of attractive form, growing to about five metres. It has beautiful single white flowers in spring, brilliant autumn foliage in shades of russet, yellow and brown, and interesting and useful small quince-like fruits. Medlars have been grown in Australia since at least 1843, and probably much earlier. If more were known of its virtues, it would be much more widely planted today.

The medlar is the sole species in its genus, and is thought to have originated in Persia, spreading to Europe and probably introduced to Britain by the Romans. It was known to the Greeks by 300 BC and is listed in the Greek Herbal of Dioscorides, compiled during the first century AD.

The fruit was thought to have medicinal properties and John Gerard (*The Herbal*, 1633) wrote 'they are singular good for women with childe: for they strengthen the stomacke, and stay the lothsomnesse therof. The stones or kernels of the medlars, made into powder and drunke, doe breake the stone, expell gravell and procure urine'.

Because of the unique shape of the base of the fruit, it was originally known in English as open arse, and in French as *cul de chien* (dog's arse).

The medlar is slow growing and is not particular as to soil. It can be propagated from seed, layers or cuttings, but more usually by grafting or budding onto apple, pear or quince stock. The only pruning necessary is to shape the tree and cut out dead wood. Medlars are often grown as standards or espaliers.

The first printed plant list published in NSW was a *Catalogue of Plants Cultivated*



at *Caudeu Park* in 1843 by J. and W. Macarthur, and listed no fewer than four *Mespilus* species: *Mespilus germanica* (the medlar), *Mespilus japonica* (now *Eriobotrya japonica* – the loquat), *Mespilus pensylvanica* (probably an amalanchier) and *Mespilus pyracantha* (now *Pyracantha coccinea*).

*Mespilus germanica* was also listed in a catalogue issued by James Dickinson, Hobart Town, Van Dieman's Land in 1845. Medlars were listed in John Rule's *Catalogue of Plants Cultivated for Sale*, 1857 at 3/6 to 5/- each. Rule owned the Victoria Nursery in Richmond, Melbourne.

The 1934 and 1936 catalogues of C.A. Nobelius and Sons of Emerald, Victoria, listed two French cultivars of the medlar: 'Geaut, Fruit flat, brown and of enormous size; tree vigorous and productive, 2/6 each' and 'Grosse Fruits, 2/6 each'. However, by 1941, Nobelius had dropped medlars from his catalogue.

In 1995 there are at least three wholesale nurseries in Victoria propagating medlars, and there may be more.

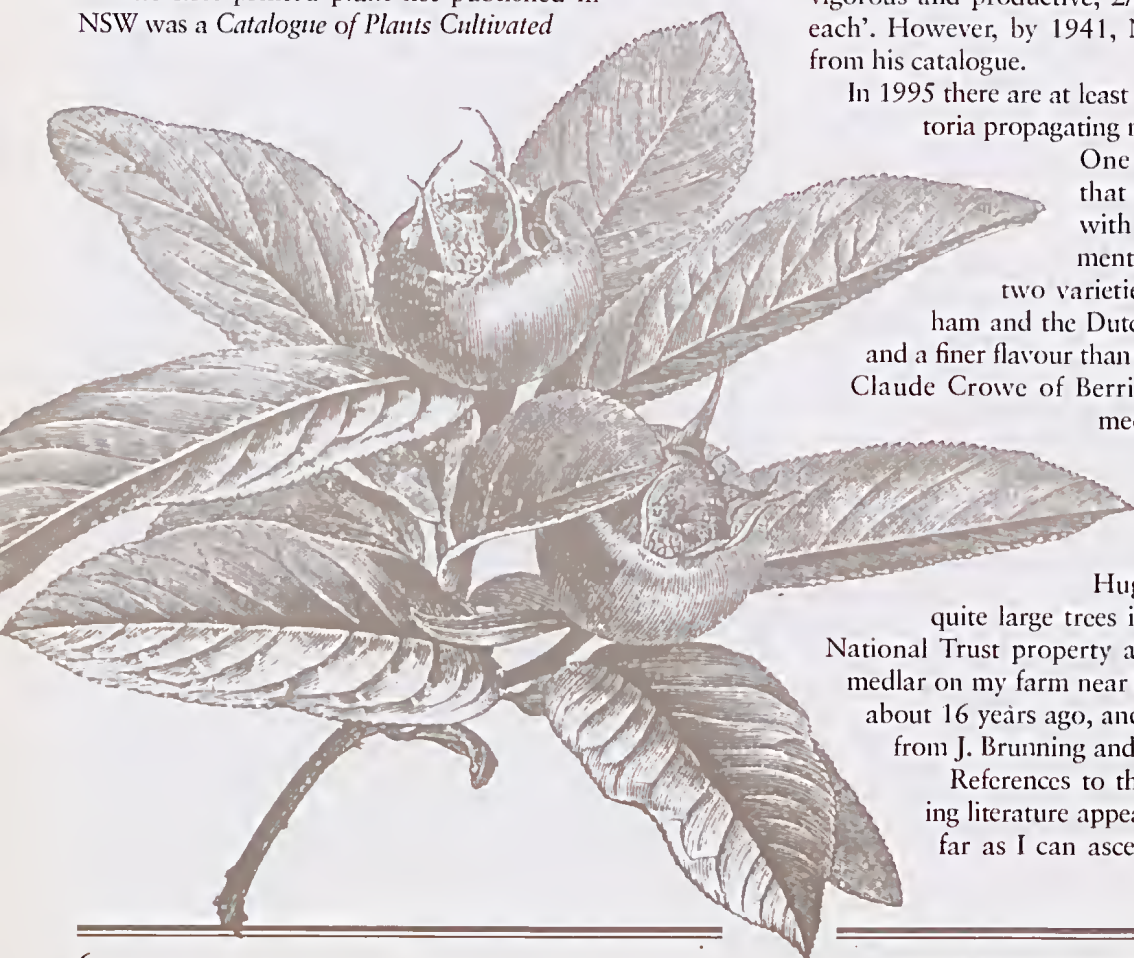
One nurseryman told me recently that the plants are sold these days with more emphasis on their ornamental value than on the fruit. The

two varieties propagated are the Nottingham and the Dutch. The former has smaller fruit and a finer flavour than the Dutch.

Claude Crowe of Berrima, NSW, remembers several medlar trees in the Albury/Rutherglen area on the NSW/ Victorian border in the early years of this century. He thinks they were planted by French

Huguenot settlers. There are two quite large trees in the garden at Riversdale, the National Trust property at Goulburn, NSW. I planted a medlar on my farm near Bombala in south-eastern NSW about 16 years ago, and from memory that plant came from J. Brunning and Sons, Victoria.

References to the medlar in Australian gardening literature appear to be few and far between. So far as I can ascertain, it was not mentioned in





*Yates Garden Guide* or Brunning's *The Australian Gardener*, both of which went through many editions. *The Australasian Fruit Culturist*, Volume 2, by David Alexander Crichton, published in Melbourne in 1893 has a section on medlars, which covers history and use, cultivation, propagation and varieties. He writes 'The Medlar will thrive in many parts of Australasia, excepting tropical regions, and will do in ordinary fair soil'. Crichton lists three varieties – Dutch, Nottingham and Stoneless, also known as Sans Noyan or Sans Pepins. Cole's *Australasian Gardening and Domestic Floriculture* by W. Elliott (1903) has a small section on the medlar, and lists the same three varieties as Crichton.

Herbert J. Rumsey in *The A to Z of Australian Fruit Growing* (1932), says 'The medlar is a tree that is very seldom grown in our orchards. It is probable that the fruit is not sufficiently popular for its cultivation to be worthwhile commercially, but the home orchard in the cooler districts should have one or two trees, even if only to beautify the shrubbery, for the tree is very ornamental'. Rumsey lists three varieties – Dutch, Nottingham and Royal.

I personally find the fruit well worth picking to eat raw in the late autumn and early winter, and to make excellent preserves. The fruit cannot be eaten raw until it is 'bletted', that is, rotten brown and soft. The medlars should be picked late April/early May and allowed to sit at room temperature until soft. The hard greenish-brown fruit (picked in March) makes a distinctively flavoured and superior jelly, which goes very well with game meats, e.g., hare, pheasant and wild duck.

Opinions, however, about the fruit and its edible qualities do vary. J.C. Loudon, in his *Encyclopaedia of Gardening* (1824) states that 'the fruit is eaten raw in a state of incipient decay, its taste and flavour are peculiar, and by some, much esteemed'. Gerard in *The Herbal* (1633) says that the fruit of the medlar 'is eaten both raw and boiled...and be oftentimes preserved with sugar or honey: and being so prepared they are pleasant and delightful to the taste'. William Cobbett in *The English Gardener* (1833), had a very low opinion of the medlar: 'A very poor thing, indeed...It is hardly worth notice, being, at best, only one degree better than a rotten apple'.

Andre Simon, in his *Concise Encyclopaedia of Gastronomy* (1952), says that medlars 'look very unattractive when served – somewhat like a rotten crab-apple. Professor George Saintsbury professed to enjoy medlars and vintage port, but the taste for medlars is limited to comparatively few people in England. In Rome, medlars are eaten freshly picked and are a popular dessert fruit called Nespoli'. Jane Grigson, in her *Fruit Book*, writes of them being sold in the markets and shops in Paris.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Richard Clough for details from early Australian nursery catalogues, and Claude Crowe for information on the distribution of medlar trees in south-eastern Australia.

Medlars eaten raw are not to everyone's taste, but these two recipes produce delicious results.



#### MEDLAR JELLY

Put hard, unripe medlars into a large pan and just cover with water. There is no need to cut them up. Bring to the boil and cook uncovered for 1-1½ hours. Strain juice through a jelly bag and discard medlars. Measure juice into a clean pan and for each cup of juice, add ¾-1 cup of white sugar, depending on your taste. Add the strained juice of 1 lemon to each 6 cups of juice. Boil, uncovered, until setting point is reached. Pour into hot, sterilised jars and cover when cold.

#### MEDLAR AND BRANDY VANILLA SYRUP

Wash 20 medlars on the point of bletting, but still firm. Make a sugar syrup by boiling 500 grams of white sugar with 400ml of water. Add 6 drops of good vanilla extract to syrup. Simmer medlars gently in syrup for 15 minutes. Remove from heat and let medlars stand in hot syrup for 20 minutes. Remove medlars from syrup with a slotted spoon, and reduce syrup to 500ml by boiling. Put medlars into a warm, sterilised jar and pour slightly cooled syrup, to which you have added 40ml brandy, over the fruit. Cover when cold.

This syrup is delicious when poured over ice-cream, or used to poach pears. The medlars will go hard and woody, and become inedible.

#### MEDLAR MESPILUS GERMANICA

Family: *Rosaceae*

Flowers: White, five petalled single blooms borne singly on short stalks in late spring.

Fruit: Stays on tree well into winter. More decorative than edible.

Size: Grows to 7m.

Deciduous tree with leaves turning a rich, rusty brown in autumn.

Propagation: Grafted onto Quince or Hawthorn stock or from the five seeds in each piece of fruit.



## THE FIGHT AGAINST ELM LEAF BEETLE IN AUSTRALIA



extracted from an article by GREG LEFOE

**T**he Friends of the Elms have recently distributed thousands of leaflets to make people more aware of the Elm Leaf Beetle, the damage it can do to our elm trees and what can be done to combat it.

If you see elm trees with leaves full of small holes, it is likely to be infested with Elm Leaf Beetle (ELB). The beetle can be sighted now as it has emerged from hibernation and has started to eat the leaves. It is the size of a small pea, oblong and light yellow to dull green in colour and lays its eggs on the underside of the leaves. These hatch into caterpillars which eat the leaves, leaving only a skeleton of veins. By late December, the caterpillars move down the tree trunk and pupate around the base of the tree. Ten days later, they emerge again to feed on the elm leaves for several weeks before hibernation with the onset of cooler weather again.

Here are some methods to fight against the ELB:

- 1 In late December, when the caterpillars are moving down the tree, they can be trapped and killed in two ways:
  - spray or paint a solution of Carbaryl at 2% strength, in a half metre band around the trunk of an infested elm, at around 1.5m from the ground.
  - ‘Trap It’ can be used to put a band of sticky material around the trunk. Follow manufacturers directions for application. Both products can be purchased at nurseries.
- 2 The beetle can be contained by a spraying programme. This is best carried out by a pest control firm or local council. Information about timing or about spray should be obtained from the spraying agent.
- 3 In late December/January, a close inspection of the ground around an infested elm will show a number of pupae, which look like curled-up caterpillars. Boiling water poured on the ground around the tree will kill these pupae. Several applications are suggested during this period.

The Victorian government has initiated a research project at the Keith Turnbull Research Institute in Frankston and biological controls are being investigated.

To support the effort to save our elms, tax-deductible donation be sent to Victorian National Trust ‘Save the Elms Fund’, 4 Parliament Place, Melbourne 3002. Membership and enquiries to Friends of the Elms Inc. c/- National Herbarium, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra, Vic 3141.



## ADRIAN MARSHALL

**W**hen I’m not designing the *Australian Garden History Journal* (or *somesuch bloom*), I am most likely be found writing in my study that looks out onto the back garden. I’m writing a novel – *The Punchcutter* – for which I have just recently received a grant from the Australia Council. I am, consequently, both overjoyed and in a certain state of shock.

*The Punchcutter* is a novel of typographic possession – Klaus, a Bauhaus type-designer, flees Germany after Hitler bans the use of all typefaces except the *Frakturs*. After a perilous ocean crossing to Australia, he falls in with the artistic radicals of the day – the John & Sundays, Arthurs, Alberts, Joys, etc – and proceeds to inflame Melbourne with his typographic radicalism. Then, in mysterious circumstances, he vanishes back to Europe. His True Love, Eulalia Sweetapple (surname courtesy of an AGHS member pictured in the last *Journal*) is left to discover the occult typographic causes of his flight. Her consequent discoveries lead her in a chase across Europe to the Nazi bombing of the Bodoni Museum in Parma (Bodoni designed the typeface we use for advertisements in the *Journal*), the whole culminating in exorcism and a blaze of ascenders and descenders, counters and serifs. On a deeper level, the novel explores ideas of the word and the Word, image and meaning.

Another project I’m working on is a small self-published illustrated book of stories around the idea of ‘India’. I’ve had good fortune with self-publishing before: my collection of short stories, *The Typetray*, illustrated by Kareen Anchen, won the Best Self-published Book for 1993. The ‘ubiquitous’ (see page 15) Richard Aitken has a copy of *The Typetray*, archivally stored in immaculate condition – and remarkably unread. I’d direct you to the State Libraries of NSW and Victoria to see *The Typetray*, but those copies have been stolen (a backhanded compliment).

Gardening and writing come together in my family through my mother, Brenda Marshall, who compiled a collection of literary rose quotations, *The Eloquent Rose: An Inspiration of Roses* (1982), with paintings by Sheila Galbraith.

And if I may – a brief note about the type we use in the *Journal*. Bodoni was designed by Giambattista Bodoni, printer to the Pope, Napoleon, and other luminaries. In his day, some said the extreme contrast between the thick and thin strokes of his type was so dazzling it was inducing of madness! The script we use is called *Stuyvesant*, for reasons that should be obvious. Sabon, the text face, was designed by Jan Tschichold, a prominent Bauhaus figure who believed that sans serif types (i.e. types without the cross-strokes at the end of the ascenders and descenders) were the only true expression of the age, the only way forward to the Universal Brotherhood of Man. He recanted, and designed the beautiful type before your eyes.





## ETHEL ANDERSON'S TIMELESS GARDENS

by HELEN PROUDFOOT

Lately, there has been some interest in the artistic work and influence of Ethel Anderson, the founder and patron of a group of mural painters who executed the wall paintings in the Children's Chapel in the crypt of St James Church, King Street, Sydney, which has recently been restored to dazzlingly original colours.<sup>1</sup> An article about her and her group by Anne Speer was published in the Spring number of *Art and Australia* this year. But there has not been any comparable interest in her writings. She published many articles and several books,<sup>2</sup> and one in particular is of interest to garden historians. This is her *Timeless Garden*, published by the Australasian Publishing Co, Sydney, in 1945.

Ethel Anderson, born in Leamington, England as Ethel Mason, was educated in Sydney at the Church of England Girls Grammar School. She married an officer in the British Army, who subsequently became Brigadier-General A.T. Anderson. She returned to Australia in September 1924 after 20 years as a British Army Officer's wife, first in India and then in England. A photograph taken of her in 1903 shows her in full debutante splendour, with a lace-frilled long white Edwardian dress, white gloves and romantically jaunty hat.<sup>3</sup> By the twenties she had a modest reputation as a writer and painter, with an interest in the modernist works she had seen and enjoyed in Europe. She became a catalyst for an important small group of painters in Sydney, centred on her home 'Ball Green' at Turramurra. The group, which included Roy de Maistre, Roland Wakelin and Grace Cossington Smith, specialised in mural painting, an unusual form at the time, when mainstream painting was almost exclusively carried out in oils, with the artist working alone and aspiring to be shown in Art Galleries.

She also had a great interest in gardens, and enjoyed writing about them. She published her *Timeless Garden* in 1945, just after the war ended, and her experience of the 'hidden' gardens of Sydney and Canberra of that era makes interesting reading now. She was a friend of several Governors of NSW and their wives, especially Sir Phillip Game (1930-35), and writes with a close acquaintance of their gardens; her essays on Admiralty House garden and the garden at 'Hillview', Sutton Forest, are romantic and atmospheric in tone, conjuring up the gardens as they echo and enhance the 'spirit of place'.

The book of essays was built on the articles and stories she had published in various distinguished magazines, in *The Atlantic Monthly*, the *Spectator*, the *Reader's Digest*, and closer at hand, in *Art in Australia*, *The Bulletin*, the *Sydney Morning Herald*, and *The Home*. She added other essays especially for the book. It could be categorised as a 'slim volume', not of verse, but of a sort of heightened prose, poetic in intent. She employs a lacy, embellished literary style, decked out with similes and metaphors, full of description, building up a picture evoking the atmosphere of the place she is describing, with the passing effects of sea and sky, the perfumes of the harbour and its flower gardens, the passing show of ships, birds, butterflies, and nocturnal animals.



A photograph taken of Ethel Anderson in 1903 shows her in full debutante splendour, with a lace-frilled long white Edwardian dress, white gloves and romantically jaunty hat.

Her style is intriguing, and reminds me a little of some of the work of Michael Ondaatje<sup>4</sup>, with her delight in out-of-the-way English words with onomatopoeic sounds, and proper nouns attached to animals, insects, butterflies, wild flower and garden plants. Elsewhere, in her poetry, she expresses her interest in euphonic word play<sup>5</sup>; a contemporary influence might have been Gerard Manley Hopkins. She lists flower names with unusual relish, both common and scientific, and has a veritable bouquet of butterfly names.



Whether it received acclamation at the time, I don't know. Probably not, as her style might have been too lavishly Edwardian for Australian taste in that time of austerity after the war. And though writing on gardens forms the backbone of the book, I don't see her essays mentioned in any bibliography of Australian gardens. They seem to have been classed as 'literature' rather than descriptive essays of real places, and dropped silently and inadvertently from the sight of garden lovers.

So, it now seems time to take out her book again, and read her descriptions of some well-known Australian gardens as they were in the 1940s: the Sydney Botanic Garden starts off the series of essays, that 'garden of Ships and Bells', and is followed by the gardens of Hillview at Sutton Forest, a Wildflower Garden, gardens at Yarralumla, Admiralty House, and several others not named but described in loving details: a Garden for Moonlight, Pan's Garden, Night-piece in a Leura Garden, and the title-piece, 'Timeless Garden-English House'.

As the garden at Hillview was the subject of an interesting article by Sally Darling in the last issue of *Australian Garden History*, (Vol. 7 (2) September/October 1995), it might be timely to look at Ethel Anderson's impression of this garden as it was when she knew it: she calls it 'A Garden of Butterflies'.

*Butterflies love hills. Here in Sutton Forest, in this Australian hill garden, the butterflies far outnumber the flowers. I can count five Satyridae to each single dandelion;... In the valley, which is a sheer eighty feet below, though it is sweet with identical but neglected dandelions, and imported briars and honey-dews, there are far fewer butterflies.*

*The fluttering thousands which grace this hill invariably begin their day in the kitchen garden where the sun comes first...the butterflies linger here, pottering about, until a towering sun leads them over the pines and oleaners to the garden's northern slopes. Here, by noonday, Pencilled Blues and Fiery Jewels dance above the China asters. Over in the cactus dabbias, Clover Blues and Painted Ladies weave flight-patterns prodigal in beauty – a beauty that pierces and passes, spent in being, as the beauty of clouds or song is spent.*

She continues on:

*Beneath late-flowering roses and salvias (stray wayfarers from warmer northern fields), Spotted Skippers rest on the gravel pathways, mothwise, wings outspread. On a Michaelmas daisy's lacy white and gold, three to a flower, wings up like sails, succeeding fleets of Checkered Swallowtails ride at anchor, but, as if by lovely accident of wind or tide, are never still.*

She discourses on the possibility of having a scientist, rather than a gardener, employed to encourage flights of butterflies, orchestrating them in drifts of Marbled Blues and Indigo Flashes over the flowering plum trees, with Tailed Cupids dancing attendance on the wisterias, and Lemon Migrants extending the daffodils. It is a delightful conceit she weaves here, musing on sea-going butterflies greeting explorers' ships, as the day grows into sunset and ten thousand garden butterflies drift eastwards.

In 'A Garden of Rock and Wind' she described the

'freckled rocks' at the foot of Admiralty House which 'rise out of water so deep that the constant ferries pass, in reckless drama, within half a cable's length, and the burgees of the yachts flutter so close inshore' that the petals of the anemones in the garden are tattered by the wind. Garden and rocks are juxtaposed on the parapet of rock,

*fobs of flowers...punctuate the rocks with colours alien to them, with claret, caeladon and braze, and with textures never intended to be cater-cousins to bressia – to establish contact by cockboat with the bark and billyboys, the bookers and brigantines, which, in the old careening days, less than half a century ago, rode at anchor in the blue bays intervening between Admiralty and the adjacent promontories.*

Above the fort which guarded the house from the Russian threat of the 19th century, 'the bevelled lawns slope suavely amid entanglements of brightest colour. Here a medley of terraced rainbows leap up from a vista of a waves as gay as periwinkles.' Her description of Sydney Harbour seen from this garden, which must be the best vantage point of all, is difficult not to include:

*Below, lie all the chameleon beauties of Sydney Harbour; and its islands, ships, aquaplanes, yachts and ferries, its steeped foreshores, stippled with flame trees and jacarandas, the bridge, tossed across it with the effortless grace of a spray of cymbidiums, glitter through rose to gold, through sable back to silver.*

Only a gardener can fully appreciate her descriptions, but they call up not only the garden itself, but also the breezes which perfume it.

*The bouquets of the felon sea-winds perfume this garden with sea-spices and ozone. Though all its labyrinthine paths are flocculent with annuals and perennials, their fragrance does not mollify the salt tang of the harbour siroccos and simooms, the blustering southerlies and black nor'-easters, which like the Etesian breezes, blow continually across it.*

We, whose senses are distorted now by the smells and urgent noise of city traffic, have lost this zephyrous sixth sense of the harbour which she evokes here.

Anderson's garden essays are eminently quotable, but more quotation might dim the appetite. Better to get the book yourself, if you can, from a second-hand dealer. It evokes in a wonderful way the ghosts of the past gardens, how they were in a more leisurely and less constrained world.

#### NOTES

- 1 Speer, Anne 'Ethel Anderson and the Turramurra Wall Painting Union, *Art and Australia*, 33(1), Spring 1995. pp. 86-93
- 2 *Adventures in Appleshire*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1944; *Indian Tales*, Australasian Publishing Co, Sydney, 1948; *Squatter's Luck and other Poems*, Melbourne University Press, 1942; *Sunday at Yarralumla: A Symphony*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1947.
- 3 Mitchell Library photograph.
- 4 Author of *The English Patient*, Picador, 1993 and *Running in the Family*, 1992.
- 5 In her preface to *Sunday at Yarralumla*, 1947.



# RIPPON LEA REVEALED

## AN APPROACH FOR RESTORING A MAJOR HISTORIC GARDEN

by RICHARD HEATHCOTE



CHRISTOPHER GROENHOUT

*Lounging through the grounds of Rippon Lea, at Elsternwick, where the late Sir Frederick Sargood did so much that others only talk or dream about, one thinks inevitably that the man who made such a garden deserved to live long to enjoy it. For it is a beautiful garden. One may say it without any kind of reservation, and feel that the word so much misused hardly conveys all his feelings. You need to look at that a long time to realise all the patient study, the regard for detail, that were absorbed in the completion of such a picture.*

So wrote Donald McDonald in the *Argus*, 19 March 1904, a year after the death of Sir Frederick. Ninety years later heritage writer Mary Ryllis Clark introduced readers of the Rippon Lea guidebook to why Rippon Lea is important with the words:

*Rippon Lea is a national treasure. It is the last of the great privately owned 19th century suburban estates to survive largely intact in Australia. Created by leading businessman and politician, Frederick Thomas Sargood, it was built and developed between 1868 and 1903.<sup>1</sup>*

Just over twenty years ago, Rippon Lea and its then owner Louisa Jones, made conservation history by preventing the Commonwealth government's plan to develop a substantial portion of the garden as an extension to the ABC television studios. Together with the National Trust Louisa Jones had sustained a decade-long campaign to save the historic garden intact to be given to the people of Victoria in accordance with her father's wish.

This victory was achieved shortly before Louisa Jones' death in 1972 and was the second occasion the garden had been threatened with subdivision and had passed into safe stewardship.

In fact, her father, Benjamin Nathan, had acquired the

The mansion is sited at the high point on the estate and the fall of the extensive lawn was carefully graded in the major changes to the garden in the 1880s. The balustrade was added in the 1938/39 changes to the terrace. Photo taken 1995.

property just after the first threat of subdivision had been averted. Sir Thomas Bent, the infamous land speculator and politician, had purchased the Elsternwick garden estate with the intention of subdividing it for suburban building blocks. The plan was largely prevented by his early death. Nathan, a wealthy Melbourne businessman, gave great energy to his garden and the development of his exotic orchid collection at Rippon Lea. After his death in 1934, his daughter, Louisa Jones, inherited the property which had been her home since 1910.

Today Rippon Lea is again under attack, but not this time by bureaucrats or developers. A different kind of enemy threatens the property, now evident in the slow erosion of authentic landscape features, senescent trees and the accretions involved in operating the property for visitors. To preserve the integrity of the garden and the spirit of the place the National Trust required a formal conservation policy. From this base a conservation plan could be developed to ensure continuity in the care and management of the property. Previously the property depended on the advice and experience of experts and professionals to maintain its character and although many eminent people gave their services, a lack of continuity and long-term direction resulted.

The Trust had begun this work in 1984 when the first of the four steps recommended by the Australia ICOMOS (The Burra Charter) was undertaken.<sup>2</sup> *Conservation Analyses* were commissioned for the landscape, fernery and buildings. The CAs, as they are known, collected and assessed all information relevant to the understanding of the place. The





CHRISTOPHER GROENHOUT

View of summer house and plantings on the south east island of the lake. Photo taken 1995.

BELOW: Panoramic view looking north across the lake with restored boat house on the central island. Photo taken 1995.



CHRISTOPHER GROENHOUT

The Archery House sited under the elms near the northern edge of the lake. It was used to store equipment for Sir Frederick Sargood's fortnightly Archery Club. The structure is clad with *Quercus suber* (Cork oak) bark and uses fern trunks for decoration. Photo taken 1995.







CHRISTOPHER GROENHOUT

View of the lakeside plantings to the east with cast iron bridge to one of the lake's five islands. Photo taken 1995.



CHRISTOPHER GROENHOUT

Serpentine Carriage Drive with canopy of *Quercus canariensis*. Photo taken 1995.



CHRISTOPHER GROENHOUT



three substantial reports argue the case for significance (aesthetic, historic, scientific and social), comparing a ranking against other similar places. The reports also include an analysis of rarity or research potential, and the function of each part and that part's context over time.

*Things were done, and well done, but just as boldly undone, because there was some little harshness out of harmony with the whole effect. One needs to know something of the history of every bed and every grassy bank, every curve in the lake of lilies to appreciate it.*<sup>3</sup>

Step two is the writing of a *Statement of Cultural Significance* which Pru Sanderson prepared in 1988 following her work on the CA.

*The garden at Rippon Lea is of international significance as a major and largely intact portion of an outstandingly designed and operated suburban estate of the late nineteenth century. All elements of Rippon Lea garden created during Sir Frederick Sargood's period of ownership from 1868 to 1903 are of international significance. It successfully combines varied design ideas of the period and retains many of these elements that catered for the publicly prominent lifestyle of one of Victoria's leading businessmen and politicians. The significance of the Sargood works relates to the layout of both the decorative and service areas of the garden, all planting except that on the mound, all the garden structures and all fittings including the underground electrical and hydraulic works. Although major tracts of what were unusually extensive service areas have been lost through subdivision, the extant service areas and facilities are integral to the significance of the property.*

*The works executed for Benjamin Nathan between 1911 and 1935, and from 1935 to 1972 for Lonisa Jones, are of local significance as examples of garden works undertaken by interested garden owners that were faithful to their periods but generally sensitive to the overall concept of the garden created by Sargood.*<sup>4</sup>

The *Statement of Conservation Policy* adopted by the National Trust of Victoria August 1995 is the third step and puts in place the overall direction the property is to pursue and defines the course of action to conserve the property for the future. This was a landmark decision for the Trust since Rippon Lea is the first property to achieve this and commit the organisation to the fourth step – the compiling of a *Conservation Plan*. This is sometimes called a 'Management Plan' and sets out the physical conservation process to be followed (i.e. what action to preserve, restore, reconstruct or adapt). It also defines the proposed use, the management structure (responsibility and mechanism), the programs for maintenance, interpretation and marketing, plus the controls and constraints on use (e.g. permits). It also establishes guidelines for the future.



Cascading waterfall on to the rock work of the Grotto which leads to the lakeside walk. Photo taken 1995.

*You must always put the conservation of the thing you are conserving before the convenience of the people who come to view it. After all, we are only one generation and we have no right to tread out and destroy historic sites. We should be able to pass them on in their full glory and grandeur to future generations.*

Dame Sylvia Crowe<sup>5</sup>

A crucial part of the Conservation Plan is the *Strategy for Implementation* which provides a timeline and details the financial resources required in relation to budget and sponsorship. The strategy must also identify the particular expertise needed to achieve the Conservation Plan.



Richard Aitken was the consultant for step three, the preparation of the Conservation Policy and he worked collaboratively with Trust management.<sup>6</sup> This successful approach utilised the knowledge and experience of such personnel as Shelley Wood, Head Gardener; Peter Struthers, Curator of Collections; Richard Heathcote, Property Manager and Carmel McPhee, Manager Trust Gardens. The process, which included meeting regularly on-site to discuss the formulation of policy, also enabled new facts which had come to light since the CAs had been completed over a decade ago to be taken into consideration. This was particularly important since the consultant's brief did not include undertaking any new research.

However, Aitken's ubiquity as a landscape historian provided some important material. For instance, he came across two previously unknown newspaper articles published in the *Australasian* in 1916 which gave detailed accounts including plant lists of Benjamin Nathan's plans to introduce more extensive plantings of native shrubs and trees to the Rippon Lea landscape and to construct a 'the largest and handsomest glasshouse in Victoria' to display his large orchid collection.<sup>7</sup> Sargood had used mostly exotic species with some eucalypts and Moreton Bay figs.

Ben Jones, son of the last owner, whose childhood was spent at the property, provided documentation such as wages records for the gardening staff from 1921 to 1937 and deeds to the property from his grandfather's probate papers. On a walk of the garden he identified the site of an air raid shelter in the orchard which his parents had constructed at the beginning of WWII (imagine Richard Aitken's glee at this discovery!).

*[Our] next duty is to conserve the place – not enhance it, embellish it or change it – but to keep it. Don't worry about all that confusing Burra Charter jargon – just try to keep it. Just think of the real and the fake – it's easier and honester than using all those fancy obfuscating terms architects and, indeed, horticulturalists, use for doing work to things, changing and removing things – making fakes and calling them conservation.*

Dr James Broadbent<sup>8</sup>

Four types of conservation treatment defined in the Burra Charter categorise the actions to be taken in the *Strategy for Implementation*.<sup>9</sup> Outlined below are some examples under each category to illustrate the exciting implications which the policy enables the National Trust to consider as part of this ten year program. The main thrust of the Conservation Policy is to peel away the later distractions that obscure the Sargood/Nathan/Jones schemes and reveal the real Rippon Lea.

**PRESERVATION** – *maintaining the fabric of a place in its existing state and retarding deterioration.*

The tree plantings which form the framework of the landscape scheme have already been the subject of a survey to establish the existing conditions.<sup>10</sup> This report together with the Plantings Base Plan Survey form the basic documentation required prior to commencing the tree replacement program which will be carried out over the next three years.<sup>11</sup> The preservation of the original treescapes by accu-

ately replanting over one hundred and fifty trees lost during the past twenty years will sustain the garden structure and ensure the scale and key vistas. Every effort will be made to keep mature trees in place for as long as possible.

A program to propagate from original gene stock is already operating successfully in conjunction with VCAH Burnley. Preservation as a conservation process applied to gardens must take a different course to buildings where the objective is to intervene as little as possible in order to preserve as much original fabric. Trees and shrubs can be grown again albeit with temporary loss of scale and texture. In the landscape what becomes important is preserving the content of the planting scheme by identifying the correct shrubs from the extensive photographic records kept by Sargood, Nathan and Jones and their employees.

These important records together with other primary documents such as aerial survey photographs (1931 to 1974) and Board of Works drainage and sewage plans (1898, 1902, 1911, 1912) give exact locations of paths and garden features on the site. A Museum and Garden Research Centre has been set up in the mansion as a repository for these documents and other relevant garden history and conservation reference material. It is planned to make this facility available by appointment to professionals, students and Trust members for research purposes in 1996.

**RESTORATION** – *returning the existing fabric of a place to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing components without the introduction of new material.*

The combined lake, irrigation and drainage system requires major work such as draining and dredging the lake of sediment which has reduced the capacity of water held for irrigation by approximately two-thirds and impedes the reintroduction of some historically important plant species.

The lake side walk and grotto (one of only four such features known to have been created in Australia – two in Adelaide and the other at Werribee Park) has been closed since 1988 because it is unsafe.<sup>12</sup> Restoration of this major garden feature is a high priority. The excitement and pleasure for visitors of passing through the grotto and under the waterfall whilst it cascades dramatically into the lake would do more to explain the delights of Sir Frederick Sargood's Pleasure Grounds and the mystery of a Victorian era garden than any interpretation panel could communicate.

**RECONSTRUCTION** of missing fabric: *returning a place as nearly as possible to a known earlier state and is distinguished by the introduction of materials (new or old) into the fabric. This is not to be confused with either recreation or conjectural reconstruction.*

There are specific rules and requirements in place to guard against anachronistic or inappropriate reconstructions in the garden. There must be appropriate documentary or physical evidence and the reconstruction must accord with the priorities which deal with existing significant fabric first.

Two structures would qualify for reconstruction: the Close House at the end of the Fernery where a range of aquatic plants, fuchsias and other plants were displayed.



Also the rebuilding of Nathan's glass house sited opposite the main entrance to the mansion and in which he displayed his famous collection of orchids. Sargood also built a glass house for this purpose and he is credited with having established the first major exotic orchid collection in the colonies.<sup>13</sup> He assembled the collection when in London and shipped it back to Melbourne in 1882, together with a new Head Gardener and plantsman. However, the physical evidence of Sargood's glass house is poor and to reconstruct it at its original location next to the Fernery would create some anachronism in the current context of the site; so the Nathan structure is more appropriate and would serve as a valuable resource for interpretation of Rippon Lea's horticultural heritage and acknowledge the prominent part the two owners played in Australia's orchid cultivation and collecting history.

**ADAPTATION** – *modifying a place to suit proposed compatible uses.*

The siting of disabled unisex toilets at the reconstructed windmill engine shed and at the Archery House annex by the lake would meet this conservation strategy of adaptation.

*Historic gardening does not mean denying aesthetics. Certainly at Rippon Lea, denying aesthetics would be inconsistent with a proper historical approach to the property. Moreover, aesthetics is, more often than not, an important part of landscape heritage. On the other hand, historical elements may not be particularly attractive. They may also be hidden or subtle, for instance the engineering feats of the water supply and drainage at Rippon Lea.*

Jan Schapper<sup>14</sup>

Finally, I should say something of the splendid team of five gardeners who work at Rippon Lea. It was whilst experiencing their ingenuity in planning and creating a 900 square metre temporary hedge maze involving the loan of 4,000 shrubs and plants for the 1994 'Art of the Garden' festival that I became convinced of two things. Firstly, that we had the skills and talent to achieve extraordinary results in Rippon Lea's Victorian era garden. Secondly, that the Trust was going in the wrong direction by continually demanding that special events be mounted to attract visitors to the gardens. The effort and resources should be put into maintaining and interpreting them as places of cultural significance in their own right.

The public will not be fooled. They know the genuine article when they see it and our job is to ensure the garden is revealed in its true character, integrity intact, with nothing obscuring the experience.

*Copies of The Story of Rippon Lea, published by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria), February 1995, are available from Rippon Lea, Hotham Street Elsternwick Victoria 3185, \$8.50 (includes p&h). Ph (03) 9523 6095.*

*Rippon Lea is open to the public every Tuesday to Sunday 10am-5pm, except Christmas Day and Good Friday.*



CHRISTOPHER GROENHOUT

Hedge maze created for Art of the Garden Festival held over three days in early spring 1994. Rippon Lea has no history of a hedge maze on site. Only the complex network of irrigation pits and pipes underground resemble such a feature. Photo taken 1994.

#### FOOTNOTES

- 1 *The Story of Rippon Lea*, published by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria), February 1995.
- 2 'ICOMOS: the International Council on Monuments and Sites, is an international organisation linked to UNESCO that brings together people concerned with the conservation and study of places of significance.  
'Australia ICOMOS is a non-government organisation that promotes good practice in caring for culturally important places.' *The Illustrated Burra Charter*, published by Australia ICOMOS, 1992, p.7.
- 3 'A Deserted Garden', Donald McDonald, the *Argus*, 19 March 1904.
- 4 'Rippon Lea Landscape Conservation Analysis', Pru Sanderson, 1989.
- 5 Dame Sylvia Crowe visited Melbourne at the invitation of the National Trust and made this statement during a lecture given on 1 September 1977 at the State Film Centre. Quoted in *Trust Newsletter*, November 1977.
- 6 Financed by a National Estate grant to develop a Garden Conservation Plan for Rippon Lea. Richard Aitken also produced the Conservation Analysis on the Rippon Lea Fernery in 1984.
- 7 Articles in the *Australasian*: 'The Ripponlea (sic) Gardens', 22 July, 1916, and 'The Ripponlea (sic) Conservatories', 9 December 1916.
- 8 Dr James Broadbent, Rippon Lea Heritage Seminar, 22 August 1992.
- 9 *The Illustrated Burra Charter*, published by Australia ICOMOS, 1992, pp.46-59.
- 10 Tree survey carried out by Clive Sorrell and completed in July 1995.
- 11 Plant survey carried out by Di Matthews and John Beetham, completed in May 1995, financed by National Estates grant.
- 12 'Rippon Lea Landscape Conservation Analysis', Pru Sanderson, 1989, p.3/27.
- 13 'Rippon Lea', *Leader*, 1 December 1883.
- 14 Jan Schapper, Rippon Lea Heritage Seminar, 22 August 1992.



## THE ORCHIDS OF VICTORIA

by Gary Backhouse and Jeffrey Jeanes.  
Published by the Miegunyah Press, an imprint  
of Melbourne University Press.  
RRP \$59.95. 412 pages including 270 colour  
photographs, 270 distribution maps, and some  
black and white drawings.

review by RODGER ELLIOT

This is a beautiful and very well produced book. To be beautiful is one thing, but will it only sit on coffee tables? I am sure the answer is 'no'.

Orchids have had an extremely high degree of fascination for many people for a long, long time. The forms, shapes, size and colour of the flowers are fantastic. Combine these features with the wonderful and exciting relationships that exist between insects and orchid flowers and it can lead to people becoming enthusiasts forever.

Some people may feel that the orchids of Victoria are adequately covered in other publications, such as the recently published *Flora of Victoria*, Volume 2. Well, this book takes our understanding to a further level. David Jones' excellent *Native Orchids of Australia*, first published in 1988 covered 190 Victorian species and in this new publication there are now 270! We gain an excellent overview of Victoria's terrestrial, epiphytic and lithophytic orchids.

The chapter on Orchid Habitats is stimulating and valuable. It may be startling for some people that about one third of Victoria orchids are considered at risk in their natural environment. Some are threatened, others highly endangered. There is a strong and excellent emphasis on conservation of orchids in their natural habitat.

The section of 'How to use this Book' is compulsory reading. Hints on identifying orchids are provided and these are helpful when using botanical keys which give characteristics that lead readers to identify the orchids to genera and species levels.

Each species has a full page and readers are provided with excellent information including the following:

- Botanical name, common name (if applicable).
- A simplified but concise botanical description.
- Similar species are given.
- Distribution and habitat information from Victoria, including maps as well as other states where relevant.

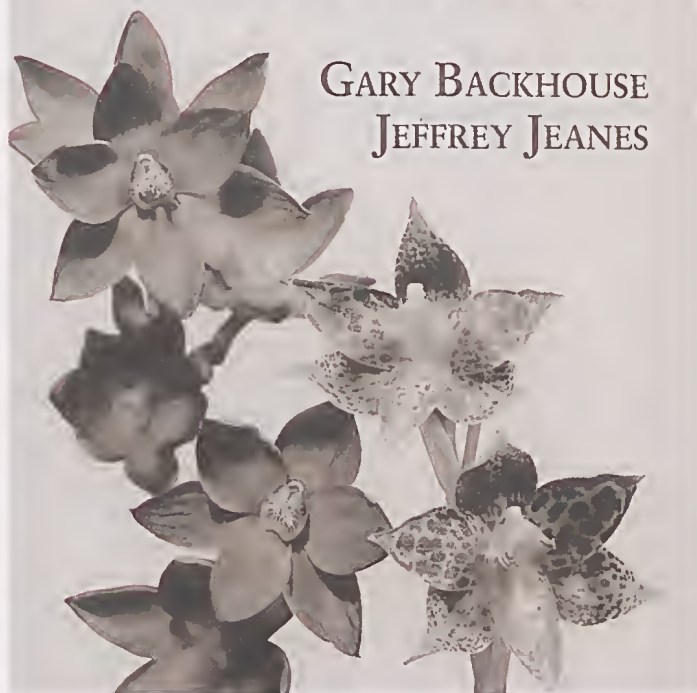
There are valuable notes on distinguishing characteristics, and the comments on floral odours and pollinators are splendid.

Each entry is accompanied by a colour photograph, most of which are superb and very helpful for identification purposes. It can be tempting for orchidologists to display ravishing, enlarged photos of the tiniest of tiny orchid flowers. This does not occur in this publication. The photographs here are taken in the wild and the location is given.

For people seeking extra information, there is a comprehensive bibliography. For those who only know common names there is an excellent comprehensive index. The endpapers are not wasted space as there are maps of Victoria with regions, place names and major conservation reserves.

## THE Orchids OF VICTORIA

GARY BACKHOUSE  
JEFFREY JEANES



It is strongly evident that the authors have an outstanding knowledge of orchids and they help us to become more aware of the value of these plants in the environment. If you are not inclined to purchase a copy for yourself, please make sure that your local library has at least one copy on their shelves.

It is noted with appreciation that this publication was helped greatly through the bequests of Sir Russell and Lady Grimwade. Miegunyah (the publishing imprint) was the home of the Grimwades from 1911-1955. Perhaps there may be some of us who could also see fit to stimulate publishing in a similar manner. Wouldn't that be wonderful!

## GARDENS ILLUSTRATED

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# GARDEN PROFILE

SAN MICHELE

by ROBIN LEWARNE

Contrasts in gardens, such as light and shade, or the careful use of different colours, make gardens and design really interesting and appealing to me. In the same way, most of my waking hours are a contrast: as an investment analyst in a large Sydney stockbrokers' office, involvement with my husband and children, and participation in community/church affairs, or working with the AGHS as treasurer. But my relaxation and passion is with garden design. I find it very hard not to buy every book or magazine I see on beautiful gardens, just in case they contain some aspect of gardening new to me. Nurseries or plant stalls are nearly impossible for me to pass by without at least some appraisal of their wares, again just in case they have that special plant or tool. When tense or worried I imagine redesigning part of my garden for relaxation.

I work long hours in an office with a spectacular harbour view, and yet I really enjoy looking up from weeding in our garden to catch our more modest glimpse of Sydney Harbour. It is so refreshing, peaceful and a welcome surprise on a sunny day. This borrowed landscape was gradually becoming obscured as trees grew up between our home and the harbour. One such tree on a neighbour's property was so thirsty that it blocked their sewage lines. It had to be removed and our harbour view is now restored. There is no shortage of trees on the lower North Shore and I, too, have been guilty of planting with little regard for the height and attributes of trees' mature growth.

My husband Warwick and I moved into his family home nearly 30 years ago, three years after we were married and when Warwick's father died. This east facing Neutral Bay house was built for Warwick's father by architect John Shirley who designed Mediterranean houses in Sydney in the 1920s and 1930s. The house was named San Michele after the house that Axel Munthe built on the cliffs above Anacapri.

I remember how Warwick's father and stepmother always used the convenient back entrance to the house because between the front gate and the front door on the harbour side there are 45 steps and two sloping paths (roughly equivalent to climbing to the top of a three storey building). Before we arrived, the garden had been kept tidy by a gardener, but was in desperate need of love and attention. As my mother and grandmother had loved their gardens and I had been used to hearing extended discussions on the merits of various plants and the problems of clay soil, I thought this would be a challenge – except that none of us had had to deal with such a steep site and with shallow sandy soil which drained like a sieve! The results of my efforts would be on constant show, as much of the garden is easily viewed from the street.

The first formal planting plan was provided by Rosalind Eldershaw in about 1986, but these have been since greatly modified. Rosalind later introduced me to the AGHS. The garden structure is excellent with three level lawns joined by brick or stone steps, flagged paths and extensive elegant



dressed stone retaining walls. The garden has a large rock shelf across the site between the house and the street. On the northern boundary of the garden are low-rise terrace garden beds (called 'the secret steps' by Warwick and his sister Carol when they were children).

With some near-vertical aspects, gardening takes on an unusual dimension. I don't attempt various weeding tasks unless someone else is home so that they can call the ambulance (or the undertaker) if I fall. But nothing like that has ever happened to two generations of Lewarne children while playing around the house and scrambling around precarious pockets on the rock shelf. I have now bought myself an





abseiling harness with the idea of tying a rope from it to the metal balconette railing, or I just hold the tied rope with one hand while I garden with the other.

Weeding is not carried out as often as needed but we have planted *Cotoneaster horizontalis* in the pockets on the rock face because they are hardy and form an interesting pattern as their fingers spread out below.

It is a challenging site. The house is perched on a rock shelf with the rock ledge extending out into the garden. The centre of the ledge has fallen away to form a natural cave or grotto into which pockets for plantings were created, with a fish pond at the bottom. The first level on the site is at street level where there are two tiered gardens containing easy care agapanthus, hydrangeas and large sasanqua camellias, a tree fern and a lemon-scented gum. Behind these gardens is a two metre high stone wall covered in a closely clipped ivy.

Standard bay trees in tubs have been placed on the paved garage roof which is crossed after climbing the first flight of steps from the front gate. This level has a low wide ivy hedge with spring flowering bulbs and a strip of lawn running up to a difficult area which has been planted with *Clivias* under the rock shelf and a tree fern next to two giant clam shells. These shells, which have always been with the house, light up a rather dark corner.

To the rear of the lawn, is the fish pond and grotto above, with a hairpin bend in a sloping flagged sandstone path and more terraced gardens on the house side. The grotto once had a huge oleander growing in front of it, blocking access to the end of this level. We eventually removed the oleander to reveal the grotto, with its pockets on each side and its worn back face. The lower pockets have been planted with birds' nest ferns and the upper two with aspidistra. On the face of the exposed rock, maidenhair ferns grow in some of the crevices.

The easterly aspect of the site allows me to grow perennials, another sasanqua and a *Viburnum x burkwoodii* hedge in the garden beds on the other side of the path. The next level features the cotoneaster with a stone wall covered with neatly clipped ivy (no plant is safe near Warwick or our daughter Kate as they think gardening is just clipping and pruning). On a higher level I have a circular grassed area edged with *Buxus* (previously a rosemary hedge which 'spot' died). On the other side I have a small white and blue garden planted with purple iris, white Japanese windflow-

ers, jonquils and sedums. Behind the *Buxus* is another dressed sandstone wall. I had this plugged to carry stainless steel yachting wire to support three climbing roses – Cymbelene, Souvenir de la Malmaison and Cecile Brunner. Plantation Pink sasanquas grow at each end of this level. In front of one of the sasanquas are two dressed stones awaiting a plank to make a garden seat on which I can sit and view the harbour rather than snatching glances while I toil. Near the seat is the top of the secret steps which descend on the north side of the garden. Here I have grown weigela and *Acanthus mollis* in the shade of a very old and large *Magnolia deudata* which grows in the garden next door.

There used to be two pine trees (very Mediterranean) on either side of the two stone access steps. These have been removed as they were so misshapen. These steps are between the rose covered walls which lead to the top lawn which runs almost the full width of the house. This lawn once had borders on both the house side and against the wall. I removed the garden next to the outside wall and allowed the lawn to cover it. This makes the area appear much larger. The remaining garden has climbing icebergs near the entrance underplanted with English lavender. There is clipped ivy under the balconette and more roses (some David Austins, more Icebergs) underplanted with catmint and erigeron.

At the end of the garden are three camellias underplanted with native violets. Above the roses is a windowbox running the length of the playroom. This windowbox is very hard to maintain (maybe when I don't work full-time...). On the balconette with its wrought iron railing is a formal tub holding a standard port wine magnolia underplanted with *Mondo* grass. At the front door are two more standard bay trees, to match those on the garage roof. The house faces a T-intersection and so we are exposed to view from more than 200 metres away. 'Standing back' to decide where to place a particular plant may mean running down the steps and crossing the road. Deciding on the most pleasing colour of the house requires us to view the house from the next hill!

The courtyard at the back of the house is simple, with a sandstone paved area, a table and chairs, and standard limes in tubs. There is another lawn on a slightly higher level with a fern garden in the corner. In this garden are a tree fern, two birds' nests ferns, aspidistra, two strelitzia and two more very large clam shells. Above on a podium are more birds' nests ferns and a Robyn Gordon grevillea with a frangipani at the back. The colours in the courtyard are green, white, orange and red. The backdrop to the courtyard is a fifteen feet high wall covered with closely clipped *Ficus*.

Gardening to me embodies the past, with memories prompted by particular plants and designs; the future, as I collect, sort, discard and choose plants and designs; and the present, as particular successes bring joy and inspiration to continue to seek the perfect solution to my gardening problems. I would like to thank the generosity of AGHS members as they freely share their knowledge and experience with me and each other.



## BEDDING DOWN THE COLONIES

by RICHARD AITKEN

Whilst browsing in an antiquarian bookshop in London some years ago, I came across an odd volume of the *Scottish Gardener: a magazine of horticulture and floriculture*, offered for a modest sum. My purchase was hastened by its mention of Thomas Walker's Sydney garden Yaralla (see *Australian Garden History*, 4 (6), May/June 1993, pp.6-8). The issue for June 1865 reprinted a long article from the Sydney-published *Horticultural Magazine and Gardeners' and Amateurs' Calendar*, in which Yaralla was inferred to be the first garden in the Australian colonies to introduce ribbon bedding. The original article (published in March 1865) has recently been indexed by the Database on Australian Gardens and Horticulture as part of research to index and abstract all issues of the *Horticultural Magazine* (1864-71).

*We may state that the head-gardener, Mr Alexander Stephen, has not been long from Scotland, having served a considerable portion of his time in the gardens at Dalkeith, Scotland, and has brought with him and carried out the system now so much in vogue in Britain - namely, the 'ribbon' system of flower gardening. Of course it will require time to judge whether the system will answer well in this colony. Anyhow, Mr Stephen's first attempt must be called a success.*

Links between Australia and Scotland have been strong and the Database is now fleshing out long-suspected horticultural relationships. Scottish horticultural ideas were circulating in Australia from first hand experience, just as Australian horticultural journals were being read in the Highlands only three months after their antipodean appearance. Stephen's experience at Dalkeith is of considerable interest, particularly due to his tutelage by its head-gardener Charles M'Intosh (1794-1864). That 'formidable formalist' (as Tait christened M'Intosh in *The Landscape Garden in Scotland*, 1980) was author of many books, including his major work, *The Book of the Garden* (2 vols, 1853-55). This work fell midway between J.C. Loudon's *Suburban Gardener and Villa Companion* (1838) and William Robinson's early books, such as *The Parks, Promenades and Gardens of Paris* (1869) and *The Wild Garden* (1870), although M'Intosh was far closer in thinking to his compatriot Loudon than Robinson, intoxicated by heady new French ideas from the *Exposition Universelle* (1867) and Baron Haussmann's Paris.

M'Intosh's *Book of the Garden* contained instructions for architectural or formal gardens, and

although not as well known as works by Loudon or Robinson, his books were available in the colonies. Database research undertaken in Queensland recently has revealed that the Scottish born and trained Walter Hill (1820-1904), who arrived in Australia in 1852 and was superintendent of the Brisbane Botanic Gardens from 1855-1881 purchased a copy of *The Book of the Garden* in the early 1860s and it was available for perusal in his library at the gardens. Mueller, too, had a copy of this work in his library at the Melbourne Botanic Gardens.

Alexander Stephen's borders at Yaralla, which the *Horticultural Magazine* candidly described as 'novel and charming', were set on a plot of ground:

*perfectly level and oblong ... bounded on three sides by a straight border having ribbons of Scarlet Geraniums and Verbenas running the whole length. The beds on the plot are of a pretty and simple description, long and wide in proportion, radiating from the centre, with here and there small circular beds, filled with Lobelia Erinus, the pretty pink Saponaria Calabrica and Escholtzia Californica. Some of the main beds have strips of Verbenas, other Scarlet Geraniums, on their borders, with the centre filled with either Colens Verschaffeltii or Salvia splendens, with here and there a plant of Tritoma uaria grandiflora mixed with them.*

This planting closely matches instructions given by M'Intosh for geometric gardens and his chromolithographed plates (see front and rear cover of this journal) give an idea of the colour effect. M'Intosh suggested that the designs be cut into turf or set in box-edged plots with gravel paving (if space was limited). Although M'Intosh did not illustrate ribbon bedding he did describe two borders at Trentham (in Staffordshire), each 624 feet in length and 'planted with three continuous lines of colour': blue *Nemophila insignis*, yellow *Calceolaria rugosa* and scarlet geranium. Had Alexander Stephen visited Trentham, with its formal Franco-Italian gardens (1834-42) laid out by Sir Charles Barry, I wonder?

We know little else of Stephen's life or career, save that this methodical Scot compiled monthly meteorological tables for the *Horticultural Magazine*. Further Database research will surely increase our knowledge of this pioneering horticulturalist and will hopefully assist in the sound management of Thomas Walker's garden at Yaralla.

Plan of ribbon border from David Thomson's *Handy Book of the Flower-Garden* (Edinburgh, 1868).

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# WEEKEND IN THE COUNTRY REPORT



FAR LEFT: Anne Charles, Rockybah, Nimmitabel and Lyn Reid, Morroo West, Deniliquin at Woomargama Station. LEFT: June Gordon, Glenis, Young; Ann Snow, Dunraven, Woomargama; Margaret Darling, chairman of the Australian Garden History Society, Woomargama Station; and Geanette Hall, Young photographed in the courtyard of Woomargama Station.



BOTTOM: Swim anyone? Vicky and John Bridgewater from the Monaro with Charlie Onus, Coolac at the Mt Annan garden.

## A WEEKEND IN THE COUNTRY – HOLBROOK AND DISTRICT

9-10 SEPTEMBER 1995

About 60 lucky souls enjoyed warm spring weather for this event, organised by Trisha Dixon and Leslie Lockwood for the ACT, Monaro and Riverina Branch.

Recent rains had brought on new grass and left much surface water. The landscape was lush and full, the air still and warm, a palpable quiet pervaded all four gardens visited.

Yabtree was first, an 1830s property off the old Hume Highway at Mondarlo, and home to Fred Horsley. The garden was laid out in 1906 by William Guilfoyle of Melbourne Botanic Gardens renown, and is thought to be the only remaining garden in New South Wales of Guilfoyle's design. The property has stone and slab buildings and a family cemetery of five generations of Horsleys, and plantings dating back to the first white settlement of the Riverina. On a flood terrace above the Murrumbidgee River, the house nestles low behind an avenue of English elms and an outer woodland of ashes, cedars, pines, oaks, planes and white cedars. The gracious 1859 house fronts onto a formal open circular lawn with a gravel carriage loop, privet hedge 'aprons' and three mature phoenix palms. An 1830s English elm towers over one side of this space, bringing scale and welcome summer shade.

Elements of the earlier garden have been simplified to make it more manageable, with wide beds of periwinkle, violets, buttercups and sour grass carpeting under the Chinese elms and other large trees. A long high pergola of grapes runs along the rear of the house, shading a paved courtyard, which opens out to a recent pool terrace, old outbuildings and a sloping lawn to the river below. An air of peace sits on the place.

Burnbank off the Sturt Highway at Borombola was next. Two photograph pin-boards paid eloquent tribute to

recent disasters suffered on the property – 1970s flood, 1980s drought and district bush fires, as well as problems of salinity and water logging. Pamela and Rick Martin and family have toiled tirelessly for 12 years, direct-seeding shelter belts

on the farm, draining low areas and re-making the garden around an existing tennis court, some *radiata* pines up the drive and three old almond trees.

Very much a 'work-in-progress', the garden today is a rich tapestry of woodland, low stone terracing, hedged garden rooms, formal and informal areas. Features abound, from scalloped box hedging to a handsome dual lavender and wormwood hedge, small statues, rose arches, a pergola covered in wisteria, a white garden, a parterre garden, a Chinese elm, crab-apple and lavender allée, a potager, an espaliered pool terrace and a formal rose garden. Their passion for plants is evident, and a dense, cottage style of planting reveals many surprises as each corner is turned, another level reached.

Sunday started on a high note (for me) and remained so. Mount Annan, between Holbrook and Jingellic, is a 1960s garden carefully planned and executed by traveller and designer Lydia Crawford, and sympathetically adapted by Helen and Ian Watson. Trees were planted long in advance of the house's construction and occupation. The house sits low in a valley floor, with a long sloping drive lined with ussurian pears, black poplars and an avenue of sweet gums. A red gravel forecourt to the garage and entry is edged with stone retaining walls and large citrus. The house is approached through a three-sided 'room' paved with square flag stones and furnished with antique dressers/coat racks and tubs of bulbs, leading through french doors into a square three sided courtyard, of flags and moss, covered by nine pollarded linden trees. This canopy evokes Renaissance gardens, and shades the western entry to the house in summer.

The house is a low white American colonial with deep green shutters and 'French door' windows. Two magnolias



shade the rest of the western wall, leading the eye off around to a high brick wall which curves around the side and down the gentle slope. Tender winter hazel, hydrangeas, cornus, winter roses, lilies and rhododendrons thrive in its shelter. A flag stone path follows the house around, above a sunken rose garden edged with upright red bricks and carpeted with strawberries.

From the front of the house, a lawn slopes down to a crescent shaped pool and a low ha-ha wall behind, the curved line of which in turn reflects the embrace of the low hills beyond. The eye is led to the water and down the valley floor in a long vista to the snowy mountains. A small brook drains the pool to a woodland dell with bog iris and daffodils.

A large evergreen magnolia offsets the lawn, and a small bed of roses edges the open verandah of the house. Evergreen species clematis climb the pilasters, with showy *C. armandii* 'Apple Blossom' in full fragrant bloom and dainty *C. balearica* covered in drooping bells of chartreuse with purple spots inside and fluffy seed heads. Gardenias and freesias hug the house, including rare tree gardenias, which had seed pods as well as buds on them.

The simplicity and restraint of this garden revealed a clear mind and a good eye for the local landscape, which whether close or far, is brought into the garden beautifully.

Lastly was Woomargama, Margaret Darling's home, not far from the village of the same name. This garden was featured in the May/June issue of this journal. A long gracious drive sweeps down a hill, crosses a creek to climb around a lake to a raised terrace where the homestead sits.

Elegant granite walls edge the garden proper and gently define the boundary between mowed and chewed grass. A bank of Chinese elms, sweet gum, planes and rare willow oak, *Quercus phellos* edge the front lawn and drive. Large gums frame the view to the lake and shelter the entry, which is simple lawn, featuring only a plane tree, a statue and a sole Indiana bean tree (*Catalpa bignonioides*).

The 1909 house is an Edwardian admixture, grand yet quirky, its severity leavened by iron lace work and asymmetry.

A shrub border of white and blush Japanese quince was in full bloom, under planted with white periwinkle most effectively. A grey and silver leaved border edges the western side of the house, with wormwood, dusty miller, pinks, buddleias and cotton lavender. Beyond a low wall a flock of black faced Suffolk sheep graze under deciduous trees.

The rear of the house wraps three arms around a large bricked courtyard, with two old silk trees, four laden grapefruit in the corners and a small central fountain. A lower level contains a swimming pool, with a square formal rose garden to one side and a knot garden filled with lavender to the other.

The paving gives way to grass and a granite ha-ha wall allows the eye again to follow the gentle rise of paddock to a distant ridge-line to the north. A secluded spring garden completes the eastern side of the house, with birches, viburnums, lily-of-the-valley bush, winter roses and other shade-loving plants below.

A hearty thanks to the organisers for all their hard work, and especially to the garden owners for theirs, and for the great food and generosity throughout.

## FROM THE EDITOR

THE EDITOR would like to thank Helen Page and Richard Aitken for their time and expertise in proof-reading the Journal each issue before going to print. Their commitment to the Australian Garden History Society and production of the Journal is appreciated. The 'new style' front cover and many of the changes in the format of the Journal have been the brainchild of designer, Adrian Marshall who has been involved with the production of the Journal since 1990 (See article on p.8).

## ASSISTANCE WITH JOURNAL PACKING

THANKS TO Helen Page, John Joyce, Beverley Joyce, Elizabeth Brown, Laura Lewis, Di Ellerton, Georgina Whitehead, Nan Grimwade and Pam Jellie.

## DIARY DATES

### SORRENTO, VICTORIA, 25-26 NOVEMBER, 1995

A selection of private gardens in Portsea and Sorrento will be opened in aid of the Jean Hailes Foundation for Women's Health on the weekend of 25-26 November. Gardens will be open from 10am to 5pm on both days. Fee: \$10. Tickets and maps can be collected from Shipway Lodge, 1 Greenwood Avenue, Sorrento on the 25th-26th.

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# BRANCH NEWS

## NSW AND ACT

### ACT, Monaro and Riverina Branch

- Friday 10 November  
Ainslie Amble – a twilight walk around some gardens in this early Canberra suburb. **MEET** 5pm Corrobee Park, Ainslie, ACT.
- Sunday 3 December  
Working bee in historic Coolringdon garden near Cooma. **TIME** 11am-3pm **ENQUIRIES** Trisha Dixon (064) 535 578.

### Southern Highlands Branch

- Sunday 26 November  
Morning viewing and talk on 'The Making of a New Garden' at the fascinating garden of plantsman Pat Bowley at Wildes Meadow, followed by lunch at Milton Park, Bowral and viewing of world famous Milton Park garden **VENUE** Pat Bowley's garden, Wildes Meadow and Milton Park, Hordern's Rd, Bowral **TIME** 10.30am at Pat Bowley's garden **COST** \$35 **ENQUIRIES** Sally Darling (048) 864417 **BOOKINGS** Dorothy Sears (048) 834 324

### Sydney & Northern NSW Branch

- Sunday 12 November  
Heritage Project site visit at St Jude's Cemetery. 106 Avoca St, Randwick, 2pm.
- Sunday 10 December  
Annual Christmas Party **VENUE** Blackburn garden, 536 New South Head Road, Double Bay **TIME** 4.30pm BYO for members, family and friends.

## VICTORIA

### Victorian Branch

- Friday 10 November  
Caloola, tour of the grounds of Victoria University – Sunbury Campus (former Caloola Training Centre) with Nigel Lewis and Richard Aitken **TIME** 6pm **COST** Members free, guests \$5.00 BYO picnic BBQ **VENUE** Golf Course Drive (via The Avenue) Sunbury. Melway 113, B12, park opposite the Administration Centre **ENQUIRIES** National Office (03) 9650 5043.
- Monday 4 December  
Christmas party/picnic BYO **VENUE** Williamstown Botanic Gardens (Melway 56 C10) **TIME** 6pm followed by talks on Lord Howe Island, gardens of Europe and other places at 8pm at the Williamstown Croquet Club, Victoria Street (Melway 56 A8) **COST** Members free, Guests \$5.00.
- Thursday 22 February 1996  
Guided Tour of Maranoa Gardens with the gardens' curator. This early garden of Australian plants commenced in 1926, and contains a rich collection of plants and habitats **TIME** 6pm **COST** Members \$4.00, guests \$7.00 **VENUE** Maranoa Gardens. Car park at end of Parring Street, Balwyn (Melway 46 G7) **ENQUIRIES** National Office (03) 9650 5043.

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA

### South Australian Branch

- Friday 1 December  
End of year gathering at Bishops Court, North Adelaide.

## TASMANIA

### Tasmanian Branch

- Sunday 19 November  
East Coast Gardens: Coombend, Belmont, Wagners, Hollyhock and Keefers Cottage at Swansea. **TIME** 11am at Coombend, 28km north of Swansea and 16km south of Bicheno on Tasman Highway **COST** \$10 Members, \$12 non-members **ACCOMMODATION** **ENQUIRIES** (002) 578 256 or (002) 578 267.

## 'HANDS ON' DAY AT HILLVIEW, NSW Sunday 3 September

Enthusiastic gardeners gathered at Hillview on Sunday 3 September and were treated to wonderful displays and demonstrations by a very generous group of specialist horticulturists, craftsmen and tradesmen. The day, grey though fine, started at about 10am with demonstrations by Charlotte Webb and Joan Arnold on just about anything you could want to know about perennials, with questions and answers flowing freely. We then went on to the pruning of roses, with Peter Cox demonstrating on the very neglected rose bushes in the Hillview garden. Howard Nicholson, who had a large display of plants, all edible, showed us how these could be used. Chris Webb had samples of various soil types and Paul Kastelein talked about windbreaks using indigenous substitutes. Judy Horton from Yates seeds talked about chemicals in the garden, and brought us up to date with the latest research.

Hillview, with its huge old trees, was just the place for Bruno Wright to demonstrate his breathtaking skills and a wonderful old elm had some much needed surgery performed.

There were many other specialists sharing their skills – Geoff McBean with advanced trees; turf and irrigation specialists and a demonstration on how to build a dry stone wall. Gilbert Teague from Florilegium had his garden bookshop with a comprehensive range. Something to interest everyone.

The day ended with a guided walk around the garden with John Stowar. It was a special day, made more so by the enthusiasm and generosity of the many specialists who shared their knowledge so freely.

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- Friday 1 December  
Wine and Cheese Christmas Function **VENUE** The House of Herbs, 1 Digney St, Sandy Bay, Hobart **TIME** 6-8pm **COST** \$10 **RSVP** by Friday 24 November to Ann Cripps (002) 251860 or Jan Ross (002) 602279.





PORTION OF GARDEN IN GEOMETRIC STYLE.

'Portrait of Garden in Geometric Style', plate 27 from M'Intosh, *The Book of the Garden* (1853-55). See article p.20.

## NOVEMBER

**FRIDAY 10** Ainslie Amble, Canberra.

A twilight walk around some gardens in this early suburb.

**FRIDAY 10** Tour of Caloola (Sunbury Campus of Victoria University) with Nigel Lewis and Richard Aitken. Sunbury, Victoria.

**SUNDAY 12** Heritage Project site visit at St Jude's Cemetery, Randwick, Sydney.

**SUNDAY 19** East Coast Garden Day, Tasmania.

**SUNDAY 26** Lunch and Garden Visits, Bowral NSW.

## DECEMBER

**FRIDAY 1** End of year gathering at Bishops Court, Adelaide.

**FRIDAY 1** Christmas Function at The House of Herbs in Hobart, Tasmania.

**SUNDAY 3** Working bee in historic Coolindon garden, Cooma NSW.

**MONDAY 4** Christmas party/picnic Williamstown Botanic Gardens, Melbourne.

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